

THE CASE OF PAUL BECK, RULE-OF-THUMB DETECTIVE

By McDONNELL BODKIN

- Greased Lightning -

CAN you run over to Ireland, Mr. Beck?" "Certainly."

"It is a painful case," said kind-hearted Mr. Warmington, "but I'd best tell you the particulars shortly and let you judge for yourself what's to be done."

Mr. Warmington was one of the wealthiest and most honest solicitors in London. He looked it as he stood there toying with his heavy gold guard, with his back to his own fireplace, though it was a sultry evening in early autumn, and there was no fire in the grate.

Mr. Warmington was six feet two of solid, respectable manhood. As a rule he was the heart and soul of good fellowship and good humor. But now a look of uneasiness and perplexity shadowed his face like an ineffective cloud on the sun.

"You know my brother-in-law, the Hon. Mr. Beck?" Mr. Beck nodded grimly. He had heard of the Hon. Mr. Burton—not to his advantage.

"Just as I was always. I am sorry to say, a trouble to his family. My wife, though only a child at the time, remembers some stormy scenes before we went abroad. After our marriage she could not bear to see my wife use, though then well on in her fifties, as she was as wild as a young colt—but not vicious. I bound her to say, 'Well, eight years ago he married me and I have been a good and passionately in love with the elderly desperado. He kept straight as a die while she lived, and was terribly cut up when she died about two years ago. She has been to him with her whole property, real and personal, 'with perfect confidence,' as she wrote, 'in his loving care for their dear old Florence.'

"I can't trust myself. Warmington," he said, "that's the truth of it. I have the money I must scatter it. You know just how the world is as strung as the strings could make it and signed it without winking."

"He seemed really devoted to the little girl, and, as far as I can see, he never knew—thought it would be good for her own age for a while; so, last Christmas she had her first kiss from the lips of the passing peddlers and that, with our own youngsters."

"Her father brought her up to town from their place in Wiltshire and left her with us; but he would not stay himself."

"Then, I suppose from loneliness, the bohemian broke loose in him again. He fell into his old ways, went the rounds of the bars, and, as you may know, often behind the scenes than in front of them. In an evil hour—one of the small hours of the morning, most likely—he fell in with Miss Trixie Mordan, the little blonde, led him to the doors of the 'Empire'." "I can't tell you, when a man of state or thereabouts falls in love he's a cropper." A clever young man quickly snatched him into his embrace and then stood out for hand-some settlements.

"He began to regret his folly in going back to his despicable ways, leaving himself without the power of giving his devotion to the most adorable of her sex, Miss Trixie. But Miss Trixie could not be won to her own ways. Sharkey—Snowy—was the little blonde who led him to the doors of the 'Empire'."

"Well, I needn't tell you, when a man of state or thereabouts falls in love he's a cropper."

"This is our client," he said to Mr. Beck, as the little lady came shyly across the room. "Come here, Flommy, shake hands with Mr. Beck; he's going to be a very good friend of yours."

Mr. Beck dearly loved children. Some years ago he had a little blonde child that died in a moment. She climbed up on his knee and pouted her rosy lips for a kiss.

"Thank you," she said—her notions of beauty were quite different from those of her mother. "I have no son or daughter, nor any mommy for them. I have no mommy myself, you know. But bappy will always take care of me."

It was the knock of a very little hand and the door opening slowly showed a pretty little seven-year-old girl.

"At sight of the stranger she started to run. But Mr. Warmington called out to her kindly: 'Come here, Flommy.'"

"This is our client," he said to Mr. Beck, as the little lady came shyly across the room. "Come here, Flommy. Come here, Flommy. Come here, Flommy."

"She turned to the door after Flommy, and said, 'I'm sorry to say, I run away and play; shut the door after me. I'm sorry to say, I run away and play; shut the door after me.'

"She turned at the door with a remanding finger raised for Mr. Beck.

"Mind, a mammy doll," she said, and sure enough a mammy doll arrived next day from Washington Avenue addressed to 'Miss Florence Burton.'

The door closed on the white dress and blue sash and tangle of gold curlers. "I'll go," said Mr. Beck abruptly, "and get dressed. I'll be back in half an hour. Still I'd like to do the dainty little lady a good turn if I could."

"The other lady's address," said Mr. Warmington, "is Grand Royal Hotel, Mount Eagle County Clara. The hotel is about two and a half miles outside the little town and close to the sea."

"It was the knock of a very little hand and the door opening slowly showed a pretty little seven-year-old girl.

"I'll go off, I have three-quarters of an hour to catch the 'Limited Lightning.' My address from tomorrow is 'Jerome Bloodsmith, Grand Royal Hotel, Mount Eagle.' Let me hear by wire what I have to tell you. I'll do the same."

Miss Trixie Mordan felt particularly dull after the first few days of her holiday in the country. The past few weeks were monotonous indeed.

"The work of the work camp," she said, "is to drill men to march rapidly past and then name as many of the objects as they saw."



MISS TRIXIE'S HEART WARMED TO HIM AT ONCE AS TO A KINDRED SPIRIT.

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The uses to which camouflage may be put are legion, and to such a high point of fitness has this work been brought abroad that many hazardous undertakings are made possible by this means alone. It has been a matter of history for some time regarding the British forces to the effect that the man who stands guard at other times, however, the whole company may be drilled in the art of observation by the simple device of laying numerous observation posts, which may be moved rapidly past and then name as many of the objects as they saw.

Whatever place camouflage may have had in Germany, the use of dead men was first resorted to in modern times by the Germans in 1915, when at the battle of Ypres it was used with such ghastly results against the Canadian forces. The Germans also made by the Germans that prior to that time the giant shells of the British contained poisonous gases. Investigation later proved that large shells too easily exploded when they were hit by a trench or dugout, which did not always explode, with the consequent forming of gas which may prove fatal to those inhaling it. The first fatality due to the use of deadly gas was by the Germans.

Gas as a medium of destruction is not only the most effective weapon which can be employed, but is the cheapest when its cost is compared with that of ammunition generally.

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